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SUBJECT: PRC PREMIER TO VISIT 7 AFRICAN NATIONS

Summary

[¶](#)1. MFA Assistant Minister He Yafei previewed Premier Wen Jiabao's June 17-24 tour of Egypt, Ghana, the Republic of the Congo, Angola, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda to reporters. Besides meeting the leaders of each nation, Premier Wen will meet Chinese medical workers, tour an HIV/AIDS prevention center that China will support, pay tribute to Chinese workers killed during the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway and attend events in commemoration of 50 years of China-Egypt relations. China will sign agreements covering political, economic, educational, health and technological issues with each country that Premier Wen will visit. AFM He declined to provide details of the agreements and ducked repeated questions about possible energy deals. Dismissing the notion that China is only after oil and ignores human rights abuses in Africa, AFM He said China is due partial credit for the reconciliation between groups in northern and southern Sudan.
End Summary.

Overall Sino-Africa Relations

[¶](#)2. On June 9 MFA Assistant Minister He Yafei briefed the press on Premier Wen Jiabao's June 17-24 seven nation African tour to Egypt, Ghana, Uganda, the Congo, Angola, Tanzania, and South Africa. Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce and National Development and Reform Commission will accompany the PRC Premier.

[¶](#)3. AFM He broadly described China-Africa relations, pointing to the long shared history from Ming Dynasty explorer Zheng He's landings on the Africa's eastern coast to the Egypt's 1956 recognition of the PRC. The African continent is increasingly unified, working to resolve regional conflicts and making progress in political stability. Since 2000, the China-Africa Cooperation Forum has been an important mechanism for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Beijing appreciates the continually strong support the African nations have shown China in the international community. "This is Africa's year," AFM He said, noting China's Africa Policy Report, President Hu Jintao's April 2006 visit to the three African nations and Premier Wen's upcoming seven nation tour.

[¶](#)4. AFM He said Sino-Africa economic ties have progressed steadily, with two-way trade growing from USD 12 million in 1956 to USD 37.9 billion in 2005. Total direct Chinese investment in Africa reached USD 1.18 billion in 2005 and 800 companies have a presence on the African continent. China has engaged in more than 900 assistance projects in Africa,

such as the Tanzania-Zambia Railway. There is robust cooperation in health, culture and education, with China already providing over 18,000 scholarships to African students.

Egypt

¶ 15. Calling Egypt a major developing country, AFM He said Beijing enjoys "very friendly relations" with Cairo, with numerous high level visits since the establishment of a strategic and cooperative relationship in 1999. Premier Wen will meet with President Hosni Mubarak, Prime Minister Ahmed Nasiz, People's Assembly Speaker Ahmed Fathi Sorour and Shura Council Chairman Safwat Al-Sharif. During the meetings with his counterparts, Premier Wen will review their bilateral relationships and discuss ways to strengthen ties. China and Egypt will sign political, economic, cultural and educational agreements. Premier Wen will attend a gala at the foot of the pyramids in commemoration of 50 years of Sino-Egyptian relations. The Chinese Premier will also meet the media to discuss China's relations with Egypt, other African nations, the Middle East and the developing world, according to AFM He.

Ghana

¶ 16. AFM He said Premier Wen will meet President John Agyekum Kufuor and exchange views on expansion of mutual beneficial and cooperative ties with the first sub-Saharan African nation to diplomatically recognize China 46 years ago. The two sides will sign agreements on trade, public health, education and human resources. AFM He said Premier Wen will attend a completion ceremony of a China-funded road renovation project.

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The Republic of the Congo

¶ 17. AFM He said the PRC and the Congo have enjoyed "traditional friendly relations" since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1964. Premier Wen will meet with President Denis Sassuo-Nguesso, who also holds the rotating presidency of the African Union, to discuss the state of bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues of common interests. They will sign agreements to strengthen economic, trade, agricultural and education ties. AFM He said Premier Wen will also visit a hospital to meet Chinese medical workers and a middle school with a large offering of China-related courses.

Angola

¶ 18. The PRC and Angola established diplomatic relations in 1983 and have enjoyed fruitful cooperation in various fields since, AFM He reported. Premier Wen will hold talks with President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and Prime Minister Fernando de Piedade Dias Dos Santos. The two sides will sign agreements covering economics, trade, agriculture, education and health. AFM He said Angola is an important supplier of oil, but would not go into further detail. AFM He also would not confirm the amount of the line of credit China is providing to Angola.

South Africa

¶ 19. The PRC Government supported the South African people's fight against apartheid and efforts to develop their nation, AFM He underscored. China and South Africa have enjoyed frequent high level bilateral visits and a strategic partnership based on equality, mutual benefit and trust. Cooperation in tourism, public health and trade has produced

practical results. Premier Wen will focus on how to deepen the bilateral relationship during his meetings with President Thabo Mbeki, Vice President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and the National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete. Cooperative agreements will be signed in the areas of economics, trade, science and technology, animal and plant quarantine, education and cultural exchanges. Premier Wen will also meet with the head of the New Partnership of Africa Development (NEPAD) secretariat. AFM He said Premier Wen will attend the China-South Africa Business Forum where he will give an important speech on China's relationship with Africa.

¶10. Asked about anti-Chinese riots in South Africa a few months ago and perceived growing resentment of China's economic intrusions in Africa, AFM He said China's cooperation with African nations brings mutual benefit to both sides. It is normal to have problems from time to time in bilateral relations, AFM He said. The key is to treat each other as equals and take dynamic and respectful action to directly address problems. This is what China is doing, according to AFM He. As for the South African complaints, these are due to complex reasons and misunderstandings. For instance, sometimes the quality of Chinese products does not meet local standards due to problems associated with globalization. AFM He said South Africa has raised this in a somber way with China and the two sides are working on this and other issues.

Tanzania

¶11. The PRC and Tanzania have had a "profound friendship" over the last 42 years, according to AFM He. Premier Wen will review these relations during his meetings with President Jakaya Kikwete and Prime Minister Edward Lowassa. He will visit a cemetery to pay tribute to the Chinese experts who died during the building of the PRC-supported Tanzam Railway. AFM He said Premier Wen will also visit the construction site of the national stadium that Beijing is funding.

Uganda

¶12. AFM He said there has been a steady development in relations between the PRC and Uganda since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1962. Premier Wen will meet with President Lt. General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and Prime Minister Apollo Nsibambi to share views on the progress of bilateral relations and to discuss ways to upgrade the

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political and economic relations. China and Uganda will sign political economic, trade, public health, educational and cultural agreements during Premier Wen's visit. AFM He said the Premier will also visit an HIV/AIDS prevention center that China will be supporting.

Ducking the Details and Challenging the Media

¶13. AFM He declined to provide specifics on the agreements that will be signed during Premier Wen's visit and deflected reporters' repeated attempts to get specific information on which countries would sign energy deals with China. He also did not provide details about the amount or types of Chinese aid to Africa, simply saying China is a developing country that is doing its best to help raise the living standards of the African people. AFM He urged understanding that China has a comprehensive relationship with Angola and it is wrong to believe that China looks to Africa solely as a source of oil. AFM He called on reporters to go to Africa to see the actual situation and report their own objective stories, instead of following the leading stories of one or two large media organizations.

¶14. AFM He disagreed with a reporter's suggestion that China ignores human rights abuses in Sudan because of its thirst for oil. AFM He averred China and Sudan have a normal, cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship that delivers tangible economic benefits to the Sudanese people. The resulting economic development promotes human rights in Sudan, claimed AFM He. China has assisted in peacekeeping operations and supported the international efforts to resolve the situation in Darfur. The recent reconciliation between rival groups in northern and southern Sudan was partially due to Chinese efforts, according to AFM He.

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